

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK...

A Short History of the Fifth Street School

If the walls of the Historic Fifth Street School could talk, they'd speak of dusty Depression-era days during 1936 when a much-needed grammar school opened to serve a bustling Las Vegas population of approximately 12,000.

It wasn't until the late 1920s and early 1930s, when construction of the federally-funded Hoover Dam took place that the need for a much larger school developed. Hoover Dam construction, as well as the reduced residency requirements for divorces, and the legalization of gambling - both occurring in 1931 - had a huge impact on Las Vegas' economic growth during this time. These developments helped Las Vegas avoid many of the economic problems associated with the Great Depression and created a population boom for the city - thus the need for a new school.

The school was built for \$230,000 (\$85,000 in federal funds were funneled through New Deal agencies; the balance came from the sale of school bonds.)

Officially called the Las Vegas Grammar School, the complex has informally been referred to as the Fifth Street School almost since its inception, due to its location on Fifth Street (renamed Las Vegas Boulevard in 1959) in downtown Las Vegas.

The complex functioned as a school, each year serving between 150 to 200 students in grades first through eighth, until 1966. It sat empty until 1970, when it was converted into Clark County offices. It was acquired by the city of Las Vegas from the county in 1996.

The Las Vegas City Council saw great potential for this historic landmark in the heart of downtown and showed their commitment to the project by transferring title of the school to the Redevelopment Agency on Aug. 4, 2004. This crucial move allowed for the use of much-needed redevelopment funds for the rehabilitation of the historic building.

Built in an era before air-conditioning, construction of the school incorporated many design features that helped cool it under the intense desert sun, including

heat-resisting overhangs, 10-inch thick concrete walls, north- and east-facing windows and cooling breeze-ways.

Open and semi-enclosed courtyards add to the ambiance of the Spanish Mission-style architecture at the Historic Fifth Street School. This architectural style experienced a resurgence of popularity from the 1910s through the mid-1930s.

Preserved were the green and blue mosaic tile patterns and decorative fountain in the building's center courtyard. Approximately 85 percent of these tiles are original, with the balance replaced by replicated tiles.

More than 141 doors and windows also were carefully recreated; only 30 of the original structures could be salvaged at the historic school.

The entire complex has been returned to what historic research has determined were the original colors. Slicing through layers of paint, a historic consultant painstakingly took samples of concrete and wood, and then performed microscopic analysis to determine what the original colors were for all of the building's surfaces.

Today, the former school serves as a "cultural oasis" in the heart of downtown Las Vegas and as home to an assortment of local arts and architectural organizations.

Now officially called the Historic Fifth Street School, the building and its site are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the city of Las Vegas Historic Property Register.

More than \$13.4 million in funding for this building's cultural transformation was provided by the city of Las Vegas Redevelopment Agency.

Special thanks to Dennis McBride, curator of history and collections for the Nevada State Museum, who assisted with historic research for this article.

HISTORIC FIFTH STREET SCHOOL

DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS, NV

MEETING FACILITIES

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Historic Fifth Street School

401 S. Fourth St.

Suite 145

Las Vegas, NV 89101

Phone: 702.229.6469

E-mail: 5thstreetschool@lasvegasnevada.gov



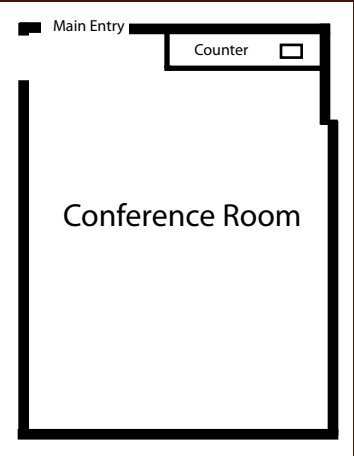
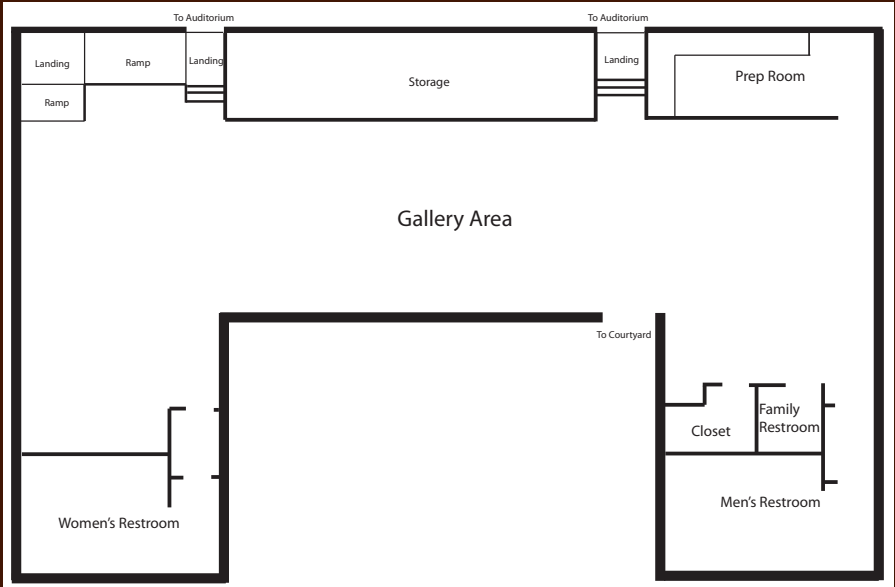
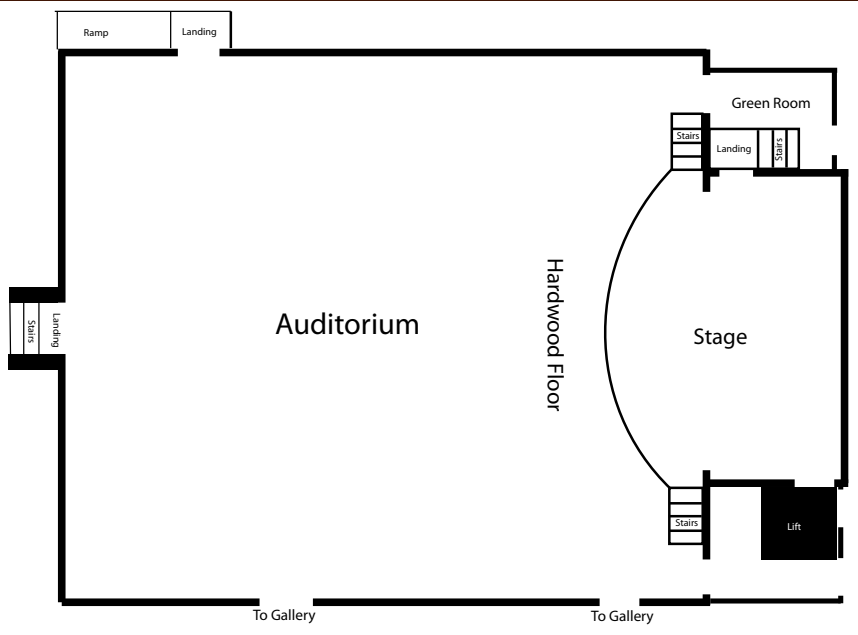
RENTAL INFORMATION

Many of the common areas of the Historic Fifth Street School will be available for public or private functions. These areas include a multipurpose performance area/auditorium capable of accommodating up to 400 people, a gallery space for exhibitions and smaller meetings able to hold up to 200 people and a 30-person conference room. In addition, there are open courtyards available for outside activities, as well as the 16,000-square-foot Centennial Plaza that can be used for outdoor gatherings. Further details are provided below.

ROOM	DIMENSIONS	USABLE SQUARE FEET	CEILING HEIGHTS	MAXIMUM CAPACITY				AMENITIES
				Reception	Banquet	Theater	Classroom	
Auditorium	70' x 80'	5,600'	22'	400	240	350	200	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hardwood floor• 24' x 35' permanent stage with curtain• Stage lighting consists of 33 DMX lights• 200-amp sound system company switch• 400-amp light system company switch• 5000-pound lift for accessing stage
Gallery	23' x 98' (U-shaped)	2,254'	11'	200	160	—	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warming/caterer's prep kitchen
Conference Room (30-seat Conference Table)	23' x 31'	713'	11'	—	—	—	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full audio/visual system
Fountain Courtyard	40' x 96'	3,840'	—	150	80	100	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electricity available
Exterior Courtyard	110' x 45' - 75' (U-shaped)	6,600'	—	200	—	—	—	
Centennial Plaza	126' x 126'	15,876'	—	400	—	—	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 200-amp company switch available

CENTENNIAL PLAZA

The .62-acre Centennial Plaza, located immediately off Fourth Street near Lewis Avenue in downtown Las Vegas, is part of the Historic Fifth Street School complex. Having at one time served as a parking lot for police vehicles, the space was transformed into an outdoor public gathering place in 2005 in celebration of the city of Las Vegas' 100 year anniversary – hence the name Centennial Plaza. Today the plaza is a mixture of ash trees, public benches, decorative concrete and lighting. At Centennial Plaza, you'll also find the Monument to the Simulacrum sculpture by local artist Stephen Hendee, which sits atop a city of Las Vegas time capsule scheduled for opening in 2105. Nearby, a replica of the famed Liberty Bell is also on display. Centennial Plaza was designed with spacious areas that can be used for cultural programming, entertainment and more.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Historic Fifth Street School
401 S. Fourth St.
Suite 145
Las Vegas, NV 89101
Phone: 702.229.6469
E-mail: 5thstreetschool@lasvegasnevada.gov